THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) to (c) Considering that the PDS Kerosene and Domestic LPG are domestic fuels of mass consumption, the Government has decided that the Oil Marketing Companies will not increase the selling prices of these products during 2003-04. The resultant under-recoveries of the Oil marketing Companies, projected to be around Rs. 8200 crore, would be absorbed/ shared amongst the public sector oil & gas companies.

Gas shortage in Eastern States

72. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Eastern States have been facing shortage of gas which has resulted in the economic regional imbalances and fertilizer and power plants have been adversely affected due to non-availability of gas;

(b) if so, the details thereof and in what manner Government propose to make up the shortage; and

(c) whether the proposal for the import of Gas from Bangladesh has materialised and if so, the details thereof and it not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) and (b) Presently, there is no availability of natural gas in the Eastern States. The Power and Fertilizer Plants in these States are also not gas based but based on alternate fuels/feedstocks. However, the Government have taken steps to encourage domestic production of natural gas by awarding Exploration and Production Blocks under New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) and Coal Bed Methane (CBM) rounds. Government is also pursuing gas imports from Bangladesh and Myanmar.

(c) The initiative to import gas from Bangladesh has not progressed further because the Government of Bangladesh is yet to take a decision to export gas to India.

Notification of gas pipeline policy

73. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are in the process of finalizing a policy for laying gas pipeline across the country;